1	UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT		
2	DISTR.	ICT OF NEW JERSEY	
3	SNELLINK,		
4	Plaintiff,	. Case No. 11-cv-02164	
5	vs.	. Case No. 11 CV 02104 . Newark, New Jersey	
6	UNIVERSAL TRAVEL GROUP, I et al.,	=	
7	Defendant.		
8	202011001101	•	
9	TRANSCRIPT OF TELECONFERENCE		
10	BEFORE THE HON	ORABLE MADELINE COX ARLEO ATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE	
11			
12	APPEARANCES:		
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1
              (Commencement of proceedings at 1:04 P.M.)
 2
 3
              THE COURT:
                         This is Judge Arleo. You're on the
    record in my courtroom in Snellink versus Universal Travel
 4
 5
    Group.
              Could I have appearances, please?
 6
 7
              MR. ROSEN:
                         This is Laurence Rosen for the
 8
    plaintiff.
 9
              MR. ZELICHOV: Good afternoon, Your Honor, Richard
10
    Zelichov, along with my colleague Christina Costley on behalf
11
    of UTG, Jiangping Jiang, and Jing Xie.
12
              THE COURT:
                         Okay. Is that everyone?
13
              MR. ROSEN:
                         Yes, Your Honor.
                          Okay. A couple of issues that we have
14
              THE COURT:
15
    to address today. And let's talk first with the motion of
16
    alternative service, and that is a motion that has been filed
17
    by the plaintiff. And as I understand it, there is a request
    to utilize alternative service as set forth in Rule 4(f)(3).
18
19
    And that rule provides that -- addresses service on an
2.0
    individual in a foreign country. And it provides that, one,
21
    service should be made by any internationally agreed means of
22
    service that is reasonably calculated to give notice, such as
23
    those authorized by the Hague Convention or the service
24
    abroad of judicial and extrajudicial documents, subsection 3
25
    says, by other means not prohibited by international
```

agreement as the court orders.

I think there's a consensus here that as to -- as to what the Hague Convention provides. There's agreement that China is a signatory to the Hague Convention. And China has specified through that Convention what service is permitted. And the case law interpreting service on Chinese nationals has discussed the Hague Convention as it relates to China. And I think the parties agree that China objects to service by postal channels and by private couriers.

So what happened here was the plaintiff utilized the Hague Convention and consistent with the Hague Convention used -- attempted to serve the defendant, Mr. Wang, through the Chinese officials. And set forth and attached to a certification of counsel filed as Document Number 89-1 and the attestation, that says, quote, the addressee refused to accept the documents.

And that has prompted the plaintiffs to file this motion for alternative service and plaintiff's request that they be allowed to effect service of process by two means.

And the first one, I'm not -- I want to hear from plaintiff's counsel about it -- by leaving a -- leaving the summons with Mr. Wang on the floor in front of his apartment. That's the sense that I -- that's what's set forth in the papers.

And let's start with that one, because here's my concern. My concern is that if we're going to utilize

```
1
    service pursuant to subsection 3 of 4(f), it has to be by
    means not prohibited by international agreement. We know
 2
    that postal channels and couriers are banned. They're not
 3
    authorized.
 4
              So wouldn't this alternate service by leaving a
 5
    summons on the floor by, I guess, by a courier, fly in the
 6
 7
    face of China's objection to service by courier?
 8
              MR. ROSEN: Yes, if we used a courier, then it
    would -- it would, Your Honor.
 9
10
              In the letter from -- we used the Hague, and we
11
    went through the Chinese Ministry of Justice to serve him.
12
    And so the -- the person from the Ministry of Justice went to
13
    his -- I don't recall -- his office, but he presented him
14
    with the --
15
         (Simultaneous conversation)
              THE COURT: Was it at his -- was it at his office
16
    or his home?
17
18
              MR. ROSEN: I can't remember off the top of my
19
    head. I can look and see what it says.
20
              But the important thing is that he was presented
21
    with the documents, and he said, he -- you know, said I don't
22
    want to take them. You know.
23
              THE COURT: Let me stop you for a minute. Let me
24
    stop you for a minute.
25
              I have an affidavit, an attestation that says the
```

```
1
    addressee refused to accept the documents. I don't see
 2
    anything that says that they had a conversation and he said
 3
    I'm not going to take it. I just have --
              MR. ROSEN: No, no, I mean, I think -- I
 4
 5
    think that's what -- what was written, so the Chinese
 6
    Ministry of Justice, they give us a return of service, and on
 7
    it, then they write -- they write, you know, what happened
 8
    and what went wrong.
              THE COURT: So all we know is what -- so I just
 9
10
    want to make sure we have the facts clear. The only fact
11
    that I saw from the Chinese government was the line that says
    the addressee refused to accept the documents.
12
13
              Right?
14
              MR. ROSEN:
                         I'll -- it says -- it says here, the
15
    addressee refused to accept the documents.
16
              THE COURT: Right, so the -- I don't have anything
    about the --
17
18
                         I mean, what might be what happened is
              MR. ROSEN:
19
    that -- is that he was presented with the documents and he
2.0
    wouldn't take them. At least, you know --
21
         (Simultaneous conversation)
22
              THE COURT:
                         All right. Let me stop you.
23
    to stop you for a minute.
24
              What's the basis of your belief?
25
              MR. ROSEN: Well, that's what it says -- refused to
```

```
1
   accept the documents. Also we have -- we have
 2
    conversations -- I don't recall if someone specifically
 3
   called the Ministry of Justice and discussed it with them or
         That, I don't -- that, I'm not sure about. But my
 4
 5
   understanding is --
         (Simultaneous conversation)
 6
 7
              THE COURT: Well, if he did -- let me stop you for
 8
             If he did, it's not before me, because I have --
   minute.
 9
             MR. ROSEN:
                         Yeah.
10
              THE COURT: -- nothing, any certifications or sworn
11
    statements of anyone in the Chinese Ministry of Justice.
12
   have one line that could be interpreted in different ways
13
    that the addressee refused to accept the documents. That's
14
    it.
15
              So --
16
              MR. ROSEN:
                         Right.
17
                        -- let's -- let's talk -- let me --
              THE COURT:
18
    let's focus back on my question. How do you -- what is your
19
   proposal. Is it -- you're going to have a courier leave it
20
    in front of his door? Tell me what you want me to authorize.
21
              MR. ROSEN: One thing you could do, Your Honor, is
22
   we could give it back to the Ministry of Justice, have them
23
   do the same thing, present the individual with the documents,
24
    and if he refuses, just leave them there. Right? Just leave
25
    them at his -- at the doorstep; right? Or wherever he
```

```
happens to be when he's served, so that he doesn't have to
 1
 2
    take it -- take it in his hands. I mean that's one
 3
    possibility.
 4
              But I think we're dealing with a person who's not
 5
    cooperative to some -- you know -- the person knows what's
 6
    happening --
 7
         (Simultaneous conversation)
 8
              THE COURT: Let me stop --
         (Simultaneous conversation)
 9
10
              THE COURT:
                         Let me stop you for a minute.
11
              MR. ROSEN:
                         Yes.
12
              THE COURT: So if you come back to me and you have
13
    an affidavit from someone from the Chinese Department of
14
    Justice that said more detail, like you said, I opened the
15
    door, it was him, I -- it was a male meeting his description,
16
    he refused to accept it, so I left it at his door, that would
17
    be -- that -- that, you know, arguably that may not offend
18
    the Hague Convention because it was service effectuated by a
19
    person affiliated with the Chinese ministry.
20
              I'm not going to authorize that in advance, but I
21
    will -- because I don't know what they're going to do.
22
    don't know how you're going to communicate it to me that --
23
    that -- through an affidavit or otherwise, that a person at
24
    the Chinese Ministry of Justice would agree to do.
25
    would say, we'll leave it at the door, and they will tell me
```

```
that he met his description, he was there, and then he --
 1
 2
    then he refused to accept it.
 3
              Because that's the way it would be -- because what
    I have to be concerned about under alternate service is
 4
    that -- is it likely to give him fair notice of the
 5
 6
                And that would give me fair notice if it was --
 7
    if the Chinese -- and not offend the Haque Convention.
 8
    there has to be something that convinces me that he lived
 9
    there and that you left it with him, and therefore if he just
10
    closes door and you leave it on his doorstep and he's inside,
11
    it's reasonably calculated to give him notice of this
12
    complaint. If he doesn't live there anymore and the person
13
    who opened the door is not him, because he left, the fact
14
    that he is -- just like in this country, when you think about
15
    service within the jurisdiction, you have to have some
    good-faith basis to believe that the place you're serving a
16
17
    defendant is where he resides. Right?
18
              MR. ROSEN:
                         Yes, Your Honor.
19
              THE COURT:
                         So I would need to know that, and if
20
    you could reasonably assure me that he lives there, that they
21
    tried to serve him and he closed the door on him and they
22
    left it at -- and the Chinese official left it at his door,
23
    that may comport with section (f).
24
              But I'm not there yet. So you need re- -- what --
25
   here's -- here's what I'm inclined to do. I'm not inclined
```

```
1
    to let you -- because I'm not sure what you want to do.
 2
    not inclined to just say go leave a copy at his door. There
 3
    would have to be a totality of circumstances that would give
    me confidence that that method doesn't offend the Haque
 4
    Convention and is reasonably calculated to give notice of the
 5
 6
    complaint.
 7
              So for instance, having a courier leave it at the
 8
    door, which is what you've -- what you really -- that's why I
    started out by asking what are you proposing. Courier would
 9
10
    offend the Haque Convention. The mail -- a mailing would
11
    offend the Hague Convention.
12
              So you -- you know, I'm going to deny your request
13
    as -- as articulated in your papers, but not foreclosing the
14
    possibility that you can make a second application for me to
15
    deem that good service, depending on the circumstances.
16
                         Yes, Your Honor. I understand.
              MR. ROSEN:
17
              THE COURT: Let me ask -- let me ask defendants,
18
    what would your -- if -- just -- would you have any objection
19
    if the Ministry of Justice served him in the -- in the manner
20
    that I just articulated?
21
              MR. ZELICHOV: Your Honor, I think it would depend
22
    on whether -- we'd have to look back at the provisions of the
23
    Hague Convention again and China's various objections to them
24
    to determine, you know, would what -- if what plaintiff
25
    does -- does offend those provisions.
```

1 And that is not something I can answer as a 2 hypothetical at this point in time. 3 You know, I -- it's hard to speak for Mr. Wang, given that I don't represent him, I have never spoken with 4 5 him, and I can't say as to whether he would object. But -but, you know, it's certainly a step in the right direction. 6 7 THE COURT: Right. And I guess my concern is about authorizing it in advance. Usually folks will ask for 8 alternative service in advance. 9 But what makes this unusual, what we just talked 10 11 about -- and I'll let plaintiff talk a little bit further --12 I'm not -- I don't think it's appropriate for me to authorize 13 an alternative means of service that requires the Chinese 14 government to do something which they may not be willing to 15 do, because there is nothing in the Hague Convention that 16 speaks to this, that a -- it talks to, from what I can 17 understand, that you can leave it -- that -- that service has 18 to be through someone from the Ministry of Justice, and if 19 they -- in an ideal situation, they open the door, they 20 accept it, service is completed. 21 But I'm not aware of anything that -- which the 22 Chinese government would -- someone from the Ministry of 23 Justice would be empowered to leave it at his door and give 24 an attestation to that effect. 25 So --

```
1
         (Simultaneous conversation)
 2
              MR. ROSEN:
                         Your Honor.
 3
              THE COURT: Go ahead.
              MR. ROSEN: I think the problem in China is, first
 4
    of all, it's an extremely large country, you know, maybe four
 5
    or five times larger than ours. And each province does
 6
 7
    things a little bit differently. And the service was
 8
    effected from the provincial ministry court system. And so
    we've -- we've had situation -- we've had a lot of these
 9
10
    Chinese cases, and we've had situations in which the -- the
11
    Ministry of Justice would consider it good service by just
12
    leaving it on his -- you know, going in his office and
13
    leaving it on his desk, whether or not he -- he formally
14
    accepts it or not -- this particular process server from the
15
    ministry, you know, wrote down what he wrote and didn't just
16
    leave it with him.
              But what really -- you know -- is good enough, just
17
18
    that he would be here, if he went to a corporation -- you
19
    know, left it with the -- with the, you know, person at the
20
    front desk.
21
              So I -- you know, what I'd like to do is just give
22
    us a chance to serve it again and -- we'll call the ministry
23
    ahead of time and ask them to just leave it with -- with him
24
    without, you know, a formal acceptance or rejection, as an
25
    option, and see if that satisfies due process.
```

```
1
              THE COURT:
                         Okay. My only -- my only question is
 2
    is that something that we should -- if that's your plan to
 3
   have the person from the Chinese ministry leave it -- serve
    it and if he doesn't answer, leave it at his door, maybe
 4
    that's something that's a narrow request should be briefed --
 5
 6
    you should get authority to do that in advance rather than
 7
    coming in after the fact.
 8
              Do you know what I'm trying to say? Because I
    think that --
 9
10
         (Simultaneous conversation)
11
              MR. ROSEN: Yes --
12
         (Simultaneous conversation)
13
              THE COURT: -- that -- is -- the way the rule is
14
    written is that you're requesting an alternate service.
15
            So that is slight- -- that maybe an alternative to
    Right?
16
    what is provided by the Hague Convention. You can take the
17
    risk of serving them and have them object to service. But
18
    you could also make a -- make a more narrow motion focused on
19
    this very issue, and that -- that way defendant could --
20
    could -- if maybe they wouldn't object to it, maybe they
21
    would, but then they would at least articulate their
22
    objections in advance of you going through the -- through the
23
    mechanics of service, again, through the Chinese ministry.
24
              MR. ROSEN: Well -- well -- service, but to effect
25
    service in China, you -- other than email, which I've seen
```

```
1
    courts approve, but we don't have his email address, it'd
 2
    have to be through the Ministry of Justice, generally.
              THE COURT: I can't -- I can't -- I'm not going to
 3
    opine on all the ways that someone could potentially serve
 4
 5
    someone in China, but I will say this, I think the case that
    was noted by the defendants, Intercontinental Industries v.
 6
 7
    Luo, which is found at F. Supp. 2d -- 2011 WL 221880 (C.D.
 8
    Cal. 2011), the court says in light of China's objection of
    service by postal channels, the permanent bureau's position
 9
10
    that private couriers should be treated as postal car- --
11
    channels under the Haque Convention and other courts'
12
    treatment of private couriers as postal channels, the court
13
    cannot authorize service to or through a commercial carrier
14
    pursuant to 4(f)(3), as it is prohibited by an international
15
    agreement.
16
              So what I could tell you is whatever means you
17
    propose has -- cannot be -- cannot be prohibited by the Hague
18
    Convention, number one; and number two, has to be reasonably
19
    calculated to give him notice of the lawsuit.
                                                   Those are the
20
    two things that Rule 4(f)(3) requires me to -- to make sure
21
    are present with respect to any alternative service.
22
              So I can't -- I'm not going to give you an opinion
23
    on all the different means, but what you propose, which is
24
    not -- which is vague, just by leaving it at a door, could
25
    potentially violate the Hague Convention.
```

```
So I can't --
 1
 2
         (Simultaneous conversation)
 3
              MR. ROSEN: Well, Your Honor, I'm not suggesting we
    just leave it at a door. I'm suggesting we have the Ministry
 4
 5
    of Justice try -- try again to serve it.
              THE COURT:
                         Okay. Let me stop -- let me stop you
 6
 7
    for a minute. Okay.
 8
              That's not what your papers say.
              MR. ROSEN:
                         I know that.
 9
10
              THE COURT:
                          There's nowhere in your papers where
11
    you say that. So your motion is a broad-based motion to
12
    leave the papers at his door. That's denied.
13
              If you want to --
14
              MR. ROSEN:
                         Right.
15
              THE COURT: -- renew your motion and make it more
    narrowly tailored, as we just talked about on the record, I'd
16
17
    be happy to reconsider that, and then I'll give defendants an
18
    opportunity to oppose it, just like we did this motion.
19
              But as framed, your motion is denied. And your
20
    second -- your alternative motion, let's talk about that for
21
    a minute, serving him through the company, the problem with
22
    that is that in this case, he's a former employee, and the
23
    company has said they've had no contact with him. So to
24
    serve him by serving his company, I'm not satisfied would
25
    also serve notions of due process.
```

```
1
              So that's -- unless you want to be heard on it, but
 2
    I think the law's pretty clear there, that if he's not a
 3
    present officer, and if there's no communication with him --
    I mean the few cases that allow it, it's when there is --
 4
    it's a former -- there's maybe a former officer, and
 5
 6
    there's -- he continues to have regular contact with counsel
 7
    and the company.
              That is not the case here.
 8
 9
              So --
10
              MR. ROSEN:
                         Yes, Your Honor, I understand.
11
              THE COURT:
                         You got it? So what I -- what I'd
12
    suggest you do is I'm going to deny this without prejudice.
13
    You can renew it as quickly as you want to. And -- and then
14
    I'll give defendants an alt- -- an opportunity to respond,
15
    and then we'll take it from there. Okay?
16
              MR. ROSEN:
                         Yes, Your Honor.
17
              THE COURT:
                          Okay.
18
              Now, one other housekeeping matter, guys, and that
19
    has to do with the motion to dismiss. Tell me about what's
20
    going on with the SEC enforcement action.
21
              MR. ZELICHOV: Your Honor, this is Richard Zelichov
22
    on behalf of UTG and Jiangping Jiang.
23
              The SEC enforcement action was brought at --
24
    settled action and is done at this point in time. I think,
25
    as you see, the parties settled -- the defendants settled
```

```
1
    without admitting or denying any of the allegations in the
 2
    complaint. And there's nothing further occurring on that.
 3
              THE COURT:
                         Is there anything as a result of
    that -- as a result of that enforcement action, which would
 4
 5
    warrant some amendments to the present complaint?
 6
              MR. ROSEN: -- judicial notice, but I think that
 7
    there are allegations in the complaint that if -- if request
 8
    for judicial notice was not granted, we would add to our
 9
    complaint. There's a number of things such as the -- what's
10
    the word -- but shall we say the diversion of about --
11
    million dollars of offering proceeds to oversee bank accounts
12
    that was alleged in the complaint. There was -- regarding
13
    the use of proceeds. There was misrepresentations as to the
14
    ownership of the subsidiaries and as to the improper
    consolidation of revenue from subsidiaries.
15
16
              So there's number of allegations that we will use
    in an amended complaint related to the SEC complaint.
17
18
              THE COURT:
                          Okay.
19
              MR. ZELICHOV: Your Honor --
20
              THE COURT:
                         Yes.
21
              MR. ZELICHOV: -- this is Mr. Zelichov on behalf of
22
    the defendants.
23
              I mean, I think what we have is I mean, I think
24
    plaintiff has essentially acknowledged thus far that the
25
    amended complaint that was -- is sort of at issue on the
```

1 motion to dismiss, doesn't state a claim, because they've 2 supplemented that pleading four times, you know, since defendants filed their motion to dismiss, including with the 3 sort of request for judicial notice of the SEC complaint, 4 5 which I must -- I must put on the record is -- those are just 6 assertions by the SEC. They were not proven. 7 not -- no one admitted to them. It's in the form of a 8 settlement. But I think the -- the -- what has resulted from 9 10 this is that we're kind of playing with a puzzle at this 11 point in time where we don't actually know what we're really 12 shooting at. 13 I think the right result of that, our motion to 14 dismiss, the one that's presently outstanding, should be 15 granted, and then plaintiffs should file a -- a motion to 16 amend under Rule 15 so that they can explain what a further 17 amended complaint might include. And then we can choose 18 whether to, you know, allow -- consent to them filing an 19 amended complaint or choose to oppose their motion to amend. 20 And then, you know, we can -- if the Court were to grant the 21 motion to amend, that we could then determine whether we 22 wanted to move to dismiss that amended complaint. 23 THE COURT: Let me save you the trouble, because 24 I've discussed this case with Judge McNulty, and he is 25 inclined to terminate the motion to dismiss, direct

```
1
    plaintiffs within 10 days to file an amended complaint that
 2
    does two things: One, it addresses all these new
 3
    developments with respect -- and the factual basis -- new
    facts that have come to light since the SEC enforcement
 4
    action; and, two, cleans up the complaint, legally and just
 5
 6
    in terms of breadth. And makes it -- and addresses some of
 7
    the deficiencies, if there are any, that defendants have --
 8
    have pointed out. But to streamline the complaint, make it
    more responsive, more carefully pled, and to address all the
 9
10
    SEC developments. And when that new complaint is filed,
11
    then -- then defendants can refile their motion to dismiss on
12
    a regular schedule.
13
              That's what Judge McNulty has asked me to convey to
14
    you, and that's why I'm conveying it.
15
              So is it possible for plaintiffs to get another
16
    complaint filed by -- within two weeks? Or do you need more
17
    time?
18
                         How much time, Your Honor?
              MR. ROSEN:
                                                      I couldn't
19
    hear.
20
              THE COURT: I was going to say 14 days? Two weeks?
21
    10 business days?
22
                         Can I have 30 days, because I would
              MR. ROSEN:
23
    like to get some information out of China that might take
24
    more than two weeks.
25
              THE COURT: For the amended complaint?
```

```
1
              MR. ZELICHOV: Your Honor?
 2
              THE COURT: For the amended --
 3
              MR. ROSEN: Yeah, I would like to try to pull some
    regulatory filings, and it sometimes takes more than two
 4
 5
            It just depends, because, you know, China's a --
    it's -- can be complicated to get things done sometimes.
 6
 7
              THE COURT:
                         Okay.
 8
              MR. ZELICHOV: Your Honor, we wouldn't object to
   plaintiffs having 30 days.
 9
10
              THE COURT:
                         Okay. So why don't we say, then, by
11
    the end of the month. Why don't we say by May 1? Okay?
12
              MR. ROSEN:
                         Yes, Your Honor.
13
              THE COURT: And then I'll do --
14
         (Simultaneous conversation)
15
              MR. ROSEN: -- we may add and subtract some
    defendants, based on some -- particularly, the PC- -- the
16
17
    PCAOB order -- I don't know if you're familiar with that.
                                                                Ιt
18
   was a -- the Public Company Accounting Oversight Board issued
19
    the order of sanctions against auditor. And we were planning
20
    to make a motion to amend to add the auditors, so perhaps we
21
    can just add the auditor now.
22
                         Okay. And would it be fair to give
              THE COURT:
23
    defendants 30 days to file a motion -- 30 days after the
24
   mo- -- the amended complaint is filed?
25
              MR. ROSEN: Yes, Your Honor, we have no objection
```

```
to that.
 1
 2
              THE COURT: Okay. If you need additional time,
    guys, just send me a letter. I'm happy to give you an order
 3
    giving you some time if you -- if you will find yourself
 4
 5
    falling behind on the schedule.
              So that'll be the schedule for filing the amended
 6
 7
    complaint and the motion to dismiss.
              In the meantime, I'll send -- I'll sign an order
 8
 9
    denying the motion for alternate service without prejudice.
    That can be renewed at any time consistent with the
10
11
    conversation we had today on the record.
12
              Okay?
13
              MR. ROSEN: Yes, Your Honor.
14
              THE COURT: All right, guys, good luck, have a
15
    nice --
16
         (Simultaneous conversation)
17
              MR. ZELICHOV: Thank you very much, Your Honor.
18
              THE COURT: -- week. Take care. Bye-bye.
19
              MR. ROSEN: Thank you, Judge.
20
              (Conclusion of proceedings at 1:29 P.M.)
21
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23
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25
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1 Certification 2 I, SARA L. KERN, Transcriptionist, do hereby certify that the 22 pages contained herein constitute a full, true, 3 and accurate transcript from the official electronic 4 5 recording of the proceedings had in the above-entitled 6 matter; that research was performed on the spelling of proper 7 names and utilizing the information provided, but that in many cases the spellings were educated guesses; that the 8 transcript was prepared by me or under my direction and was 9 10 done to the best of my skill and ability. 11 I further certify that I am in no way related to any of 12 the parties hereto nor am I in any way interested in the outcome hereof. 13 14 15 16 17 S/ Sara L. Kern 18 April 2, 2014 19 Signature of Approved Transcriber Date 20 21 Sara L. Kern, CET**D-338 22 King Transcription Services 901 Route 23 South, Center Suite 3 23 Pompton Plains, NJ 07444 (973) 237-6080 24 25